BRIEFING PAPER November 28, 2017

Issue: Coordination of cross-agency activities to address per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS)

- **Background:** PFAS compounds present challenges to states and local communities across the U.S. While consumer products and food are a source of exposure to PFAS chemicals, drinking water can also be an additional source in the small percentage of communities where these chemicals are known to have contaminated water supplies. EPA and states have been working with local communities to address the presence of PFOA and PFOS in drinking water systems above EPA's Health Advisory levels, and PFOA and PFOS in private wells are also presenting a significant challenge in a number of communities. The presence of GenX and other PFAS chemicals in drinking water is an additional concern in North Carolina and other states. There are multiple pathways for PFAS compounds to reach drinking water, including direct industrial discharge to water surface water, air deposition, and seepage to ground water. Recently, the discovery of widespread PFAS contamination associated with a leather tanning site in the state of Michigan prompted the Governor to establish a Michigan PFAS Action Response Team to develop "cooperative relationships among local, state, and federal agencies" "for the mitigation of PFAS contamination."

Near term priorities:

- The Agency for Toxics Substances and Disease Registry within CDC (ATSDR) plans to release a draft toxicity profile for PFAS chemicals for public comment in December. The draft document presents a health screening value for PFOA and PFOS that is 10x lower than the EPA drinking water Health Advisory level. EPA is requesting a senior-level meeting between ATSDR and EPA scientists to better understand the science underlying the differing conclusions.
- PFAS in North Carolina, West Virginia, and Ohio. PFAS contamination from an October spill at NC Chemours plant resulted in elevated PFAS levels in downstream drinking water. NC Department of Environmental Quality withdrew the wastewater discharge permit. EPA HQ offices, Region 3, Region 5 are also working with WV and OH to address new PFAS sampling results related to the Parkersburg, WV Chemours facility.

EPA's Cross-Agency PFAS Coordination Committee will ensure that EPA activities to meet PFAS challenges are focused and non-duplicative, and the Committee will provide policy recommendations on additional EPA actions to address public health concerns with PFAS in the environment. The Committee recommends continued work in the following areas:

- ***Addressing public concerns and informing risk mitigation activities by filling human health toxicity data gaps.*** EPA is gathering the latest information on the toxicity of PFAS compounds and using new methods to better understand the potential risk of PFAS compounds found in the environment.
- ***Establishing validated methods for measuring the amount of PFAS in different environmental media to estimate exposure and potential health risk.*** EPA is developing methods to measure selected short-chain PFAS (e.g., GenX) in drinking water and is identifying state and contract laboratories for external laboratory validation of methods for water and other media.
- ***Reducing PFAS exposures by limiting production of potentially hazardous PFAS and by assisting states and federal partners in the remediation of environmental media.*** EPA is reviewing hundreds of pre-market alternatives to identify toxicity, fate/transport and bioaccumulation issues of concern before they enter the marketplace. EPA is also providing technical support (i.e. sample analysis, site characterization) to states, tribes, local governments and federal facilities, and is developing technologies to treat and manage PFAS wastes.
- ***Improving risk communication efforts to ensure the accurate and timely communication of information to the public and local governments, tribes, and industry.*** EPA is developing consistent cross-agency talking points on EPA efforts to address PFAS nationally, and is working with states to identify best practices for communicating with the public about PFAS.